

VZCZCXRO2644
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHRY #0510/01 2391633
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 271633Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3975
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000510

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: TECHNICAL DISCUSSION ON ELECTIONS SUGGESTS FURTHER DELAYS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A recent discussion of technical issues indicates that Guinea's elections may end up getting delayed once again. A decision to add twelve new voter registration sites abroad, which appears to be a unilateral directive from the GoG, poses immediate technical and logistical problems. The decision is all the more troubling since it comes just a few days after stakeholders had agreed to accept the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to conduct registration in eighteen countries. Meanwhile, the GoG has announced that its share of election funding has been disbursed, but contacts report that it is still sitting in the Central Bank.

The National Transition Council (CNT) has yet to take shape and is unlikely to do so soon since the Forces Vives has rejected the CNT's current composition of members. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) During a routine election focal group meeting on August 26, which focuses on the technical aspects of election organization, several key issues were discussed. Chaired by the UNDP Country Director, the meeting included representatives from the EU, France, Spain, and Japan as well as the Director of Electoral Operations for the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), and the Secretary General of the Guinean Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP). USAID attended on behalf of the USG.

WHERE'S THE MONEY?

¶3. (SBU) MATAP confirmed that the GoG had already disbursed its remaining 30 billion GnF contribution for elections to the CENI. (COMMENT. As of August 27, contacts reported that the funds were still sitting in the Central Bank. The GoG continues to say that the money is available, but it is not. END COMMENT).

DIRECTIVE TO EXPAND DIASPORA REGISTRATION

¶4. (SBU) Much of the discussion focused on the issue of registering the Guinean Diaspora for the upcoming election, an issue that has been on the table for months. Last week, the Ad Hoc Committee on elections had recommended that the CENI develop a plan for registering voters living in seventeen foreign countries, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had approved, adding one additional site to make the total eighteen. However, members of the focal group seemed surprised to learn that the GoG is now planning to conduct registration campaigns in twelve additional countries, bringing the total number of sites up to 30. Added countries include Mozambique, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, South Africa, Togo, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Portugal, and Russia.

¶5. (SBU) Participants commented that the additional burden is likely to have a significant impact on the technical process, and ultimately, the election timeline. The CENI had already developed a plan to conduct registration in the previously agreed upon 18 countries, which was scheduled to begin on September 7 and end on September 21. The remaining 32 voter registration kits were to be used for this purpose. However, the need for campaigns at additional sites means that a total of 68 kits will be needed. These kits are not available in Guinea.

¶6. (SBU) Members of the donor community voiced concern over this decision, which appeared to be a unilateral directive from the GoG. The UNDP Country Director commented that the decision will need to be approved by political parties. Further, he said the impact of the additional sites needs to be analyzed immediately since it is likely to delay registration. USAID echoed these concerns, commenting that the decision comes late in the game. He emphasized that elections could be held without the broader participation of Guineans abroad, as is done in many countries, because the benefits of such an extensive registration program are unclear when compared to the costs in terms of financial and technical resources.

¶7. (SBU) The French representative raised questions about how the decision was made while Spain questioned whether the number of voters in these additional countries would be all that significant. The EU said that Guinean stakeholders should evaluate the issue with a certain degree of pragmatism. Participants recommended that Guinean

CONAKRY 00000510 002 OF 002

stakeholders quickly evaluate the pros and cons of the decision and present a recommendation to the CNDD to keep the number of sites at the original level of eighteen.

NO TRANSITION COUNCIL

¶8. (SBU) The group also discussed the National Transition Council (CNT), which is a key element of the election timeline. Participants said the CNT is already behind schedule as participant groups have not yet named their representatives. (COMMENT. In the Forces Vives' August 23 declaration, the coalition rejected the CNT, claiming that CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara had unilaterally added names to the list. END COMMENT).

AND NO APPROVAL OF NEW DATES

¶9. (SBU) Participants noted that the CNDD had not yet issued a decree to officially announce the new election dates recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, casting doubt on political will.

COMMENT

¶10. (SBU) Completion of voter registration abroad and the acceptance of the recommendations of the CNT are both key elements of the adapted election timeline. The August 26 discussion indicates that these elements are already behind schedule and if not resolved soon, may fuel arguments to push elections back even further. The decision to add twelve registration sites appears to be a directive from the GoG, which has observers wondering whether or not it is a deliberate attempt to prolong the transition. At the same time, it may not be a done deal. The UNDP is working with the CENI in order to demonstrate the constraints this decision will put on the agreed upon timeline. END COMMENT.

